

The Sky is the Limit (The Complete Story)

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"The sky is the limit, isn't it?"

Let me start the story with an introduction, my name is Nathan and I have made a lot of money in the robot industry. I was able to create a new kind of robot with the ability to, pretty much, blend in with any other human being on earth. These robots were created out of organic material. Synthetic flesh and bones that go along with a biological hard drive that resembles and acts like a human brain. Bodily fluids, however, were the only possible way to tell these robots apart from human beings without contacting a surgeon. At this point we still hadn't been able to create a fluid that resembled the real texture of blood. As the robot bodies were created to be human-like they could either process food like any real human, or a paste was inserted to supply the needed energy to their cells. This required creating another human like behavior to dispose of the waste, either using a regular toilet, or a service pod. On request it was even possible for the bots to reproduce a real human being if the required sperm and eggs were provided. Due to the money I made I was able to afford an estate that made some towns look very small, and of course, the finest professionals, money could buy.

Everything in my life seemed to be quite perfect, if a bit unreal. The property was maintained by robots and was kept spotless at all times. Don't get me wrong, the company was doing fine, yet life was lacking some aspects. The government, however, was always interrupting our day-to-day business. For example, all robots were expected to have a chip installed as an indication that this was not a real human being. I thought this was my greatest concern on the eventful day I meet Nina. But I should probably start this story from the beginning.

We had regular staff meetings to talk about new ideas for possible new inventions and how to improve existing ones and proceed with the company. Usually these meetings were quite boring. The old team was brilliant, and responsible for my carefree life, but they were running out of new ideas. One of the scientists stepped up and told everyone "The sky is the limit and we have reached it!" After this comment, I spotted Nina for the first time; she was mixed into a group of trainees and the media. The press was sometimes invited to our meetings and they were always hungry for a scoop on the latest invention. When Nina heard the statement, she impressed me immediately by stating, "The sky might be your limit, but as far as I'm concerned it's not. Let me start by saying that at the beginning humankind thought the earth was flat like a board. Then some brave man said, "No it's not," and managed to prove everyone wrong. The Sky is the limit? Why were we able to send people to the Moon, and even Mars, if the sky is the limit?" I stood up, clapped my hands, and asked her to come tell me what she thought was the craziest idea she had in mind?

I still remember her stepping up to me, even blushing, when I thanked her for her speech and asked her which team she was on. Nina replied, "I just started with the latest group, we are supposed to check all the departments." This was when it got even better, she wasn't simply blushing anymore, she was now a deep red. I told her that after that great speech, in front of so many strangers including the press that I would like to give her the opportunity to become the head of development if she could prove she had what it takes. I said as I smiled her, "You get nine months to nurse your baby!" Afterwards I addressed my team and instructed them to, "Please assist with this young woman's vision as much you can. She might be the one who moves this organization further ahead of anyone else in the market."

The rest of the day was uneventful, I checked the latest news, and they slaughtered my giving such a young inexperienced girl such a great responsibility. Yet others were congratulating me for taking the risk, giving a young woman such a great opportunity. It all just made me smile and I wondered about some of the possible ideas she might have in mind. The next day started normally and during my usual morning walk I had a special interest in seeing the new starts, all of them were very polite, and some had a great future, but my special interest was with Nina.

When I approached her, the first thing I asked was if she had already sorted everything out with HR. I also asked if she would need any help with her new task. Nina's first response was a cheering, "Yes sir! Everything is set and I am ready for my new task. Are you sure you really want to give me this chance?" I confirmed my decision and personally showed her around. I introduced her to the most brilliant scientists, and programmers, in the company, commenting that if she needed any of them for her ideas she was more than welcome to add them to her team.

Nina was interested in Jeff, the scientist who came up with the idea of having the storage system for the bots be implemented into the "Brain" system. She also asked about one of the doctors and she asked immediately if she could bring them along for a chat. I was looking forward to seeing this, and joined the meeting. I wanted to see what she had in mind. Nina recalled Sci-Fi movies from the past, telling us about movies like Surrogates, and Avatar. In these films people had the possibility to connect their mind to a robot, or other creature, and be whatever, and wherever, they wanted to be, without any physical harm to their real body. This as well as the idea of teleportation - she defiantly touched one of my nerves as I was fascinated by these subjects, as well, but never mentioned it to avoid being called crazy.

Nina was conveying her idea with such enthusiasm, when I stopped I found myself looking at the two scientists who were already falling into the Surrogate/Avatar topic. Some sketches were already on her laptop and when I asked them what they thought I felt like a fool when they replied that this was no great issue, technology had made it this far. No connection would be required for a complete session, one would only need the booth to take care of the body and send signals to the "Avatar," for the main body functions to work without an operating mind. The also felt that for the robot some safety mechanism would be required so that no one could override the current directive. The next question

was from Nina and me, just how long would this take? As the guys looked my way they were also talking to each other, discussing the subject, and their answer was a fortnight, maybe sooner.

What can I say? I was full of joy, when I saw Nina at my desk a week later asking me if I would like to see their first official test. When I arrived at the highly secure lab I saw all three of them looking my way and a collection of robots. I was immediately asked the question, "Would like to try it?" I didn't even think about it for a split second. I asked, "How is this going to work?" They pointed at a box which, more or less, resembled the one you saw in the movie "Avatar." Jeff explained how everything was supposed to work and that he also had added a failsafe system which stored a current copy of the user's memories, and which prevented copies the experience, in that the backup file was deleted as soon as the person had left the box, without incident.

I was in a Sci-Fi movie, so it seemed, when the System asked me which robot I would like to choose. I offered to make a selection from all the robots I saw earlier. I didn't want to read too much and just selected number seven, as this was my lucky number. The transfer went, much to my surprise, without any further action. As I started moving unnaturally in the new body however I realized that this robot was a female version. I was in for quite a surprise, as the movement was a bit off from what I was used to, and the heels were, really, not helping. When I looked at the other three, the first thing I could say was, "if any of you are laughing, you're next, and up for a greater humiliation." When I heard my voice, you can imagine my surprise, I didn't make a choice on looks, I made it from the Number, and when I approached the mirror you can imagine the shock when I saw a gorgeous blonde looking back, mouth agape, in an state of surprise, well, more like shock. The guys were standing back and trying to avoid any specific attention, but Nina was there to help me, in a second. She said, "Sir I didn't know you are into dressing up," and smiled. I said to her, "Please stop this, I choose this number because it is my lucky one, and usually does me right."

I said to Nina, "I would like to continue with this experience, a bit, but first can one of you guide me to the dressing area and pretend that I'm just another robot? I need to find some fitting clothing for me. Nina, I assume you will do the honor!" We just left the others standing there while we left the high security lab. When Nina told me that we needed to change two things, first the outfit as requested, and second and more importantly, the name as it might be weird if others heard her address me as Nathan. The name change was easy, I had been thinking about something completely different, but Nina asked, "what about Nathalie?" She said, "This would be similar to your real name and no one would be suspicious." All I was able to say was, "OK," as I was still concentrating on walking in the new shoes. As soon as we arrived at the station used to get the robots sorted, and dressed, for shipping, Nina took the lead again asking me if I had made up my mind. She didn't wait even a split second before pushing me into the next free booth, picking my outfit for me. It felt really weird being in the machine. As the System was checking my serial number it wasn't able to detect one, the only information it could get was robot #7, assigned to the "top secret" lab, not to be altered in any way. This was quite a disappointment for Nina as soon as I was out of the booth she

told me that she was not allowed to make any changes. I smiled, and trusted her, as she seemed to be trustworthy saying, "booth security override for robot #7, allow full access as commanded, and demanded, by Nina. As soon as I entered my security code into the system, the process repeated itself. This time Nina choose very good looking business attire for me with pants, really classy, and not going with my worst fear, going for something I would regret.

The remainder of the tour around the factory felt just plain weird. Nina was greeted very casually and I was just treated like any guided visitor, in my own company, but then again, how were they supposed to know? Anyhow when we returned I got out of the booth as though nothing had happened. The first thing I noticed was the curiosity in the faces of all three of them, no one dared to ask, and my reaction was simple, "It was amazing! If you would like to try it and have your own experience, please feel free. I ask that you not leave the property, as the government might take you as unregistered robot; they are quite harsh with their regulations. They monitor, more or less, everything that goes in or out. Good work and congratulations guys, please take a week off, you deserve it."

Of course I reserved #7 for myself as I really liked this robot, and the look I received from some guys, this robot was registered as my PA and given almost the same rights I had. One thing that troubled me was that I always had to go to a special area to change back into my own body, but I assumed this could be fixed. I was already amazed at what they were able to do in such a short period. The three specialists for this project were officially off for the week, but I saw them sneaking into the lab every day and continuing to work on their project. I was quite surprised when I heard that new bots in the shape of animals were added to test. One day a dog was standing in front of me and I was just thinking, "Hey boy, how did you get in here?" Suddenly the dog started to point at the booth and I realized that this was actually Nina in this robot. I said to the dog, "I see you are having fun, well, tell me all about it when you are back on duty next week."

The week went by in the blink of an eye. It was a bit of a conflict, our usual duties versus dreamland playing with the robots. Of course, there was the regular business stuff, for me. All three team members reported back to work officially, and we discussed the latest events, and of course, our experiences with the robots. Nina seemed to have had lot of fun trying different forms, species, and genders while picking her robots. As we gathered the information, I was wanted their opinion as to how we could get this up and running quickly. The guys even told me, after they saw me struggling to walk in heels, that they had adjusted the avatars, the dog for example, so that the user could get into character much easier. I didn't really understand, but some demonstrations did the job, now I was happy with the changes. The next big task was to find a way to turn this into a profitable invention, of course, legal needed to be involved, and the party poopers from the government told us their concerns and requirements to put it on the market. As for Nina she got her promotion, from new hire and trainee, to Manager in no time. Some people had already asked if she was that good outside her regular duties and gossip started. I had been robot jumping as my PA a lot, and people noticed that Nina was rarely seen either without me, or my PA. As for the other two, I needed them to remain quiet and not tell

anyone. Normally I do like a little gossip as it keeps the mind sharp. I didn't ask them to do this for me for free; they were fine with me supplying a new house system, including a test version of the new invention and some complimentary robots. As for Nina, she sent a standard system to her parents, as she only lived in a shared apartment and hadn't purchased a house yet.

Our next staff meeting was quite boring, with the usual information, when the topic came up about the new resource team I let everyone know that were working on something really big, and if legal and the government approved it, that it might be the next big thing. At any rate, they were able to prove that the sky was not the limit! I encouraged everyone to come up with new ideas. The last time this idea was stated, at exactly this location, we were able to prove that our only limitation is our own mind. Who told you that it doesn't work? Did this person try it themselves? Did they have the resources we have? If the any of these answers were no then please feel free to try it, but always start from the ground, and not by jumping from a skyscraper.

The company was having great success in its day-to-day business, yet I still wanted to have our latest invention up and running as soon as possible. The new Avatar system was still facing government approval. The government quickly had more and more tests up and running to prove there was no risk to the human controlling the Avatar. It looked like everything was too good to be true! I even created a promotional event for everyone, to try to hack into the system. I hoped the hacker would help us to find any security flaws in our system as well as consider working for us. As no one had succeeded getting into our system so far, I placed a nice reward on success.

Later that day I gathered with the four of us involved in the project. Imagine my surprise when Jeff and Nina volunteered for the experiments directly, but the Doc bailed out, as he would be on holiday at the time of the test. Jeff's wife Jane heard the news and was more than happy to assist, but not as one of the people controlling an Avatar. No, instead she wanted to live out a fantasy, to use, as well as choose the robot for Jeff. By now, I on the other hand, had a lot of faith in Nina so we teamed up as well. We did all this to ensure that nothing would go wrong and our partner in crime could take care of the project and run interference if needed.

The rules for the event were quite easy, the time and duration was one week, starting Monday, 1200UTC. The reward was one million US dollars, along with two robots of the winner's liking, a house system and, of course, a job offer with no further questions asked. Every one of the participants chose their own Avatars, as the Government was monitoring this event they demanded that the Avatars were allowed to run wild, outside the plant, and were even tested in average day-to-day life. One requirement from the government was that the avatars had to be identified as robots using the usual chip. I didn't like this idea but without it the Government would stop the project before it had even begun.

The day of the event started with the four of us monitoring the security reports and system to see if anyone was able to get into, or close, to our system and our beloved

robots. There were all kinds of amateurs trying to hack their way into the system, but no really good, or even better, successful attempts had been made so far! At this point we began to set up our own Avatars for the field test. I choose my beloved #7, aka Nathalie. Nina made plans for the day so that we could spend some time together. Jeff was not allowed to choose his Avatar as his wife wanted to do it for him, and I had a great laugh when I saw the one she picked for the first time. Jeff's new avatar was a standard female robot dressed, programmed, and outfitted, like every other MaidBot we make, nothing fancy, just your average MaidBot.

As I continued to follow Jeff and Jane's story, he was in for a surprise when he saw his robot for the first time. His wife had his avatar delivered to their home in order to blend in with the rest of the robots in their system. She even asked Jeff to only respond if he was addressed as Jasmine, the name she intended to give the robot. She even tried to give the house system some control over Jeff's robot; she wanted it to assign the same rights and duties to him as any other robot. But Jane's plans failed in this respect, as our robots were set on high security to prevent being overridden by any other system, much to Jane's disappointment.

Jeff was so excited that when some of Jane's friends came over he pretended to be just another MaidBot, serving food and drinks, as well as, following orders. When the day and the party was at an end Jeff returned to his wife in his regular human form and Jasmine the robot was standing by in a neutral, inactive, state. The failsafe caused Jane to be a bit disappointed so Jeff, unwisely, messed with the settings of the robot allowing his wife to give it commands and she was added to those able to control the robot. However this action created a conflict Jeff wasn't expecting, this new directive interfered with the existing orders to only follow commands from the control booth the human Jeff was in while controlling Jasmine, this was designed to ensure Jeff had full control at all times.

Jeff reported to his wife that he had altered the settings to her liking. Imagine Jane's joy, when she addressed the house system, commanded it to include the new robot, and assigned the new robot the name Jasmine. The next day, when Jeff entered the booth and the system activated, he found himself in his Avatar as expected. In the beginning Jeff had a lot of fun, letting go, and following the orders his wife gave him. Unfortunately for Jeff, the fun ended immediately when Jane received a phone call and told him, "sorry hun I totally forgot that I promised my friend Stef I would help her this afternoon, it will probably be late, when I get back." Jeff was disappointed and decided since the fun was over for the day he should regain control and tell her to enjoy her day and that he would be fine. That was until he realized that he had no control of his Avatar at all.

The only thing Jane heard from Jasmine was, "yes Mistress, is there anything else I can do for you?" Jeff tried as hard as he could but nothing happened, he found that he had no way to communicate with his wife. Jane smiled and thought to herself, "Wow he is really getting into this role, I never expected that." The next couple of hours felt weird Jeff was fully aware of everything that was happening but could do nothing about it. The house

system ordered him to clean, hover, and keep the house tidy, Jeff found that he had no other choice but to obey.

Jeff really began looking forward to when his experience would be over and he would again be able to regain control. What he hadn't planned on was when Jane came back with Stef and both of them were pretty wasted. Jeff heard Jane say, "look around, you remember how our old dorm looked? I'm still the same old Jane but now the robots are keeping everything spotless." Jeff didn't know what to think about her statement but that all changed when Jasmine, and her two companion MaidBots, were commanded to report to the mistress of the house immediately. All three robots, including Jeff complied, standing at attention while awaiting orders.

Jeff was not happy when he heard Jane say, "Computer, please allow Stef access and follow her commands as long as I don't interrupt. Ok, probably three MaidBots are too many, and what are their names? I'm too drunk. Computer, please assign the name silly bitch to all three of them." Then Stef said, "Jane, do you remember that slut from our old school? Doesn't this robot look just like her, while pointing at Jasmine? Can I play with it, insult, and humiliate it a bit?"

Jane just smiled and was fine with the Idea, not even thinking that this was her beloved Jeff. He was completely humiliated but couldn't protest, as both of them stood there laughing. The next day Stef thanked Jane for the fun day and left. At this point Jane realized that Jasmine had not been saying anything to her, and she asked the house system to send Jasmine in for a report. The computer's response gave Jane a shock when she was informed that no robot with this name was assigned to the house system.

Jane said, "Robots, please state your designation," and all three robots replied in unison, "Unit designation: Silly Bitch, assigned to the household of Jane and Jeff!" As all three robots looked the same Jane was in a panic. Jeff wanted to scream to her but, as before, the system wouldn't allow Jeff to instigate any form of interaction without first being spoken to.

Let's take a break from Jeff and Jane's story at this point and continue with Nina and my story. Nina had talked me into a girl's day out filled with shopping and having fun. I dressed my avatar, Nathalie, up in something casual and joined Nina for a shopping spree. Nina asked, "Nathalie would you please take a look at this beautiful, whatever?" Hell, I didn't even know so many names for female clothing existed. I did enjoy Nina showing me some new outfits and I enjoyed seeing my avatar in something sexy.

The bad part was that some shop security systems were set to scan for robots and due to the required chip in Nathalie; I was detected as a robot as soon as I walked past the scanner. Nina always introduced me as her personal robot, and assistant, what I didn't know was that some shops are fitted with display runways for robots, more-or-less like a catwalk to model clothing. It felt like my control was overridden by these systems and I found myself modeling everything Nina commanded me to try. I had no option but to walk back and forth on that runway modeling everything from lingerie to business casual.

Unknown to Nina, I kind of enjoyed the experience, but when we left the stores Nina apologized to me. My only reply was, "no worries it will be my turn tomorrow," then I smiled at her. We had a fun day and though my credit card suffered a bit, it was worth it. I always fancied Nina, but at this stage I can say, I was truly falling in love with her. I asked her if she would like to join me at my place and the reply from her was, "Yes I'd love to." What can I say, we had a fun night but it seemed a bit wrong, in my opinion, as she spent the whole night with Nathalie and not the real me.

The next day our role-play was supposed to be reversed; I thought when Nina asked if I would mind spending another day as Nathalie and she would make it up to me, that this would be a great idea. I was not sure what she had in mind but I simply agreed to it. I was a bit nervous, as this would mean we were both in our Avatars with no one to back us up in case of an emergency. But when I saw Nina in her robot I was excited and let's just say, a bit confused. Nina chose a really good looking male Avatar, due to our experience in the stores, she asked me to spend the day at my place with some special settings in the security so we could play a bit. My imagination went crazy and I would have probably agreed to anything she asked for.

Back at my place she asked, very politely again, if this was ok that she wanted to take the lead, if I was up for some role-play. The game was quite simple, she played the Butler, and my role was the maid. Nina even put our records into the system and had prepared a failsafe. The system needed my approval before continuing, and as I was totally distracted, I simply agreed. I thought male-female role-play at my place, what could happen?

Man I found out how wrong I was when I heard the door open, and my sister Mel stepped in; she had a key to the house and dropped in from time to time. She was in the area, visiting friends, which was usually no big deal, as the house is big. The system usually told me everything in advance but for some reason I was distracted this time. Mel exclaimed, "OMG, what is Nathan up to? Why are robots toying around in his living room? Computer, please place the robots in their default positions then have them report to me."

As we had lowered our robot's security settings the computer took over and we found ourselves standing at attention in front of my Sister. We weren't able to fight it. Then Mel said, "Bots, please state your designations. Our responses were simple and as commanded I stated, "My designation is Nathalie, I am assigned to the house system and owned by Nathan," soon afterwards I could hear Nina say, "I'm James assigned to the house system and owned by Nathan."

Mel had been around my creations for years and was used to this, since nothing seemed to be wrong at this point she gave us our orders. "James, please clean up the mess here, and Nathalie please prepare my room for the night with new linens, and can you inform my brother that I am here?" The computer system had quite a conflict how it could send me a message to inform me that my sister was in the house. Thankfully, due to this conflict, the system crashed and rebooted giving me full control of my Avatar this

allowed me reset it in case anything else happened.

My second reaction was to ask, "Mel are you alright?" After I had deactivated the control system, I had a lot of explaining to do. I started to explain everything to Mel and she just smiled at the two of us and said, "So I finally got to meet the woman that managed to get my brother interested!" I planned on spending the night, tomorrow I want to see the real you. No robots, and no disguises, and I will want the full story. Have fun kids, and I'll see you tomorrow. While looking at Nina I couldn't stop myself from saying sorry to end it this way, but I hope you don't mind. This was the point when Nina started giggling; boys never knew that we women already know. I kissed her and we spent a fun night together.

The next morning started with me telling my sister everything, and why we are using the robots. She was smiling yesterday, but today, she was just plain laughing out loud when she said, "so little bro you like a dominant girl taking the lead and doing some role-play?" Who would have thought that the big business man has a feminine side? Nina started to smile at me and I could only reply with, "jealous?"

As my sister was already on the topic I invited her to visit the lab. The system was running fine and I was informed that Jeff had been online for the past 72 hours. I tried to call Jeff, but there was no response. I called Jane to find her in tears, telling me what happened, and that she had three bots at home answering to the name "silly bitch" that all looked exactly the same. I drove to Jane's place with Nina and Mel in tow. When we arrived, Jane was already at the door motioning for us to come in.

I said to her, I have no Idea how to get Jeff back, if I reset the wrong one I might fry his brain. When I mentioned this she cried again. I told Jane what had happened to us, and that she needed to call all the MaidBots and have them report to her. Then we could switch off the system. Hopefully, this way we could regain full control. You could see Jane's relief when she did so, and one of the MaidBots suddenly said to her, "Hi honey, glad to see you, it was sure fun but next time we need to make arrangements so that you can tell me apart from the other two bitches." With that said we all breathed a sigh of relief and started to laugh then said we would meet up in the lab for before making further arrangements.

My Sister kept laughing at what she had just witnessed, "So little brother you are not the only one who got himself almost trapped in one of these things. You need to work on security to prevent incidents like that from happening. As far I can see this has been a running event, so far with no real harm done yet silly humans getting themselves in trouble for no reason could be a problem." That said, I tried to change the topic, "Sis you already saw what happened so let me introduce you to my Team. First, meet Jeff and his Wife Jane, the lovely lady over there is Nina, and the one explaining everything to you is the real me, you know, me from the day I was born."

Mel looked over everyone then said, "So there really is a weirdo team trying to destroy humanity. Let's get something to eat, I don't know about you, but I'm hungry so while I

think about yesterday, we can continue talking while we get something to eat. I'm really curious and really hungry!" All of us went to brunch and it was quite fun, everyone was talking about their experiences with the system thus far. Mel was in-between fascination, and total shock, regarding what the team had been able to do so far. When we were done she asked Nina to join her for a bit and told the rest of us not to be good and not to go to crazy.

That day in the lab my usual duties seemed quite boring, some meetings, some tests, and when I got out of the lab Nina and my sister were just approaching. I saw them hug and say good-bye then my sister rushed to me and whispered into my Ear. "Take good care of Nina, she seems to be your soul mate and is as crazy as you are. You won't find a girl better suited for you then she is!" With that said she added, "Good bye, and take care not to get yourself trapped in an uncomfortable situation," and then she was gone. Nina and I chatted a bit about the day's events and about our plans for the Weekend. The next day with Jeff and Jane was also similar, testing the Bots, doing some errands with our Bots, and then returning to the lab, no reports, no security breaches, nothing at all.

However, Saturday was a real game changer the day went crazy. Most of the people in the company were off with only a few tech guys monitoring, and running interference, in our challenge to see if anyone could hack the Bots or our System. The four of us started the day by choosing a Bot for the day to prevent sitting around in the lab. Then we were preparing to do some outside activity, and that is when we started to get some strange reactions from the Bots. The first thing we noticed was a conversation, as far as I know Jeff and Jane only speak English, maybe they had some Spanish or Latin in school, but nothing else but suddenly they began to talk in fluent French.

This new development gave us an idea someone might have gained access so I suggested we go back to the lab. When we checked the settings from our Bots, for some reason, they had been changed. Reports from our tech team were missing, and though it might be just some sort of accident, we thought at this point we had better be careful.

Back in our real bodies, we investigated the Avatars and ran complete checks. There were no traces of any third party access and after several more thorough tests, I just wanted to say case closed, let's continue. Suddenly the Bots began to move and operate as though they were being ordered to do so by either the system, or our control, but all of us were standing there.

At this point a security breach, red alert, was triggered. I was in contact with security almost immediately and asked, "Can someone please explain this to me?" After I said that one of the Bots approached us and informed us that his name was Alexander Schmidt and he was an exchange student from Germany, currently at the local High School. Alex also mentioned that he had heard about the event and wanted to give it a try.

I was shocked when so many experts had been invited to try yet some Nerd managed to crack the system in a couple of hours? "Impressive!" I said, "Hi Alexander I'm Nathan, CEO of the company and I'm glad to announce that you are the first to manage to get into

the system at all. Would you mind meeting us here? Of course, only if you have time. In case you don't know how to get here I will send someone to pick you up."

About an hour later I met the boy, a typical Nerd, the beloved target of every high school bully, afraid of sunlight, and with no real life at all. With that in mind I introduced my Team, "I'd like you to meet Nina, the latest brilliant addition to the company and Jeff, and his wife Jane." Then I had the pleasure showing him around the factory and the system he was able to infiltrate. Alex exclaimed, "WOW, I thought this was a computer game, some virtual reality program, I wasn't aware that I actually got to mess with real people and real robots. Is there a chance you can explain this to me?"

With that being Alex's first response, I could only reply with, "slow down a bit, this is a high security environment and I need to do a few things first. Let me by saying, can you prove, and show us that you really gained access? As soon as you do I will need you to sign a non-disclosure contract saying that you will not tell anyone what happened here and what you have seen so far."

Alexander just smiled at me, while responding, "The first part is child's play, please pick a Bot you want me to access and command" I pointed at my #7, Nathalie; he played a bit on his mobile and the next thing I could see was the Bot walking over to us. When it stopped Alexander addressed the Bot, "Bot, please state your Name in English, French, Russian and German. As soon as this task is completed, please change the language settings to German." Imagine the three of our surprise when the Bot reacted with my name is Nathalie, Je m'appelle Nathalie, Меня зовут Натали, Mein Name ist Nathalie. Kann ich ihnen sonst noch irgendwie behilflich sein? (Is there anything else I can assist you with?)

When I tried to address Nathalie, she refused to reply, it appeared as though she no longer understood English anymore. The next response was from Jeff standing there mouth agape next to us, "Alexander, please explain!" When Alexander started to explain what he had done to Jeff, he lost me in a second, and the same seemed to be the case for Jane, she just stood there playing with her feet. Nina and Jeff's attention, however, was glued to his explanation. After his demonstration Alex again asked about the Bots, how they work and could he try one?

After signing the contract Alex was dragged to the booth, or control panel, as he loved to call them. Alex played with the controls quite a bit and soon Nathalie walked over to us and began addressing us in plain German. "Kann ich die Anderen auch einmal probieren? Das ist so faszinierend." We looked at each other, then Alex, and I said, "English please!" Alex replied, "Oh sorry, I completely forgot, can I try the other Bots as well? This is so fascinating."

I agreed, all of us were looking at him and thinking, "it looks like we got a new guy on the team, and he has the same sense of wonder we had after we invented this." It was getting late fast and this talented boy was joining us for a chat after he was running around with every bot in the test lab. Sunday, came and went with nothing serious

happening.

The Event had reached its final minute and no one else had gained access to the system. Trying to contact Alexander, or Alex he asked us to call him, was also no problem. When he came over we had Human Resources join in ask his social security number, work permit, and so on, horribly boring stuff if you ask me. But this was a requirement from HR. We had one mature topic to solve as well, Alex only had a student visa and therefore we asked him to finish school first and work part time to his liking until his schooling was finished. We noted that even if he was based in another country the Bots would make it possible for him to, virtually; join us in this lab later on. Imagine my joy when we received permission to let him join us part time and he was more than happy to get involved in the research.

Time was flying by; the Bot system was quickly being perfected with Alex's mobile app, due to his research and talents. Still the Government didn't want us to release it to the public and the list of things on their agenda, to prove, never seemed to end. I assigned an extra team whose sole purpose was to work on government requests.

I had something new in mind for my development team, and when I called the next meeting I referred back to the beginning. I opened by saying, "Nina, when you joined I asked you what you had in mind. We discussed that between the two of us, but did you ever have a chance to talk to the team about it?" The team members were all looking my way, Jeff, Alex, and the Doc. I said, apart from the Avatar System, we had been discussing the possibility of a working teleportation system.

I told them, "I assume this won't be accomplished as fast as our previous project, and to reiterate, this is top secret! Jeff, I know your wife will get all the information out of you sooner or later so we need to invite her to join us. Alex you should be aware that no one outside of our team is supposed to know about this until the public release. It would be great if one of you could provide a theory on how we might bring this idea into reality."

As I expected, this new project was not moving forward as quickly as the previous one had and so, we skip ahead seven years. What happened during this time, you might ask? Nina and I got married and had a daughter, Laura. Our parents wanted to be closer to their grandchild so both our parents purchased homes in the neighborhood. Jeff and Jane are still married and enjoying some role-playing games, with the Avatar system spicing up their life.

As for Alex, he got his work permit, became engaged to a pretty, young, woman named Amy, and became a great member of the Team. The Avatar system however was restricted by the government and only used for official government duties. The military and police are quite happy with the Avatar system, as they can prevent human casualties by using the system.

As for the public, well most people refused to believe the Avatar system was real when you explained it to them. A great change was that the old ID cards were replaced by ID

chips. Animals had been chipped for quite some time, to help in their recovery when they were lost, and now it was required by law that every human had one of these chips as well.

An unbelievable amount of data was everywhere, the ID chips were cheap and mass-produced, so even shops used them to keep track of where every bit of inventory was. Shoplifting was now even more difficult, since the chips reported almost everything. The shop's attitude had become, "please try stealing this, the Police will be with you in no time!" The development of a real, flawless teleportation system, had failed so far. The team had implemented everything and the ability to regenerate the item worked perfectly, but security to prevent tampering with the transmitted data was not yet set in stone, this data could be altered.

And this is exactly where I would like to catch up with the story. At first we did some experimentation using the Bots as test subjects. We developed a system to digitize the atomic structure of the subject identified by its chip. Once a scan had been completed the transport system would begin the transport sequence. Believe it or not, as seen in old movies the chip and the item associated with it, dissolved into thin air. Then the chip and its associated object, with the help of the teleportation system, were recreated at another location.

The machine that recreated the scanned object looked, more or less, like giant 3D printer. An experiment using the Bots, or just about any other inanimate item, was no problem at all. The ID chip to be used needed to be specified for the system, since usually the clothing for the bots didn't include any ID chips. But some items and special situations did. This is where specification of the chip was both required, and important. You didn't want the teleporter to use the wrong ID chip while recreating the sent object.

Alex found out that instant recreation at the new location was not necessary, as was usually depicted in movies and TV. In actuality you could store the pattern, and then recreate the object later. After Alex discovered this we had successful tests with Bots and even Animals with no harm done.

How does the teleport system work exactly? I'm not entirely sure; Alex and Nina tried to explain it to me a hundred times. From my understanding, when you press the transport button the item's atomic structure is scanned into a data image, then the object is converted from matter into energy. The image data is sent to the remote location and finally the item is recreated on the other end. When they would get into describing the specifics it was beyond my understanding.

Alex, a great Fan of mobile technology, created an app to try to explain it to me. "It works just like Photoshop," was his explanation. The object to be sent, in this case a bot, is scanned by the system then recreated as it previously was at its destination X in this demonstration. Alex changed the picture and the item was recreated on the other end. He even told me to make sure you had a 3D image; with only a simple 2D image you

would only get a picture on the other end. While explaining this I watched as the beautiful perfect working Bot became a Barbie Doll.

I said to Alex, "This is so freaky, what about the rest of the material?" Alex told me, "Well the energy to be precise, is stored like the power in a Battery so it can help later to, say create something way bigger. The only thing that remains the same is the chip, but the information stored within the chip is amended."

Alex excused himself as his Girlfriend called again, asking where he was, and said that she was waiting for him to go to the family dinner. Jeff and Jane had plans for the weekend as well; even Nina was gone for a Hen's Party this weekend. So I was left alone with an invention I wanted to experiment with. Surely curiosity and interest were paying a toll, and Alex, who told me not to make something silly, was the enabler when he installed the app on my mobile.

Well, what can I say; I was so happy when my sister Mel told me that she would be over for the weekend. I thought, "She will be able to save me if I do something stupid," at least that was the plan. Laura was safely dropped off at Nina's parent's house, so I could play. We planned to meet up on Sunday at the lab again for some small talk, along with some food; this gave me two days to play.

In the beginning, everything worked fine, I took the needed devices, scanned, and teleported the object. Yes being able to override security was something great! For the next step I tried simple things, I changed one of our Bots complete appearance from female to male, and got it to report no errors, thinking this was too good to be true.

I was inspired with my next Idea when I saw Laura's dog in the backyard, a cute, little, typical, white Maltese that goes by the name of Daisy. In my opinion the dog is more like a toy than a real dog and that's what I used it as. I said, "Hey Girl how did you get in here," while trying to get her close to the scanner. Laura and Nina would have probably killed me if they ever found out what I was doing, but Daisy just volunteered.

After a simple scan the dog dissolved, the next thing I needed to do was choose the destination and final form. I could choose anything I could imagine, anything that came to mind. I thought, "Let's get really crazy." I went through the phone's database and found 3D samples for dolls. The System received a reading for two chips and wanted further specification. When I checked I found it was the chip in the dog and the one in its collar. I programmed the dog to be the Barbie Doll and its collar to be the doll's dress.

Everything went flawlessly. When the animal reappeared, I picked up a regular Barbie doll wearing a typical dress. I removed the dress to have a closer look at the doll and figured out that it was just like any other. When my inspection was complete I realized what I had just done and hoped that I could reverse it. While checking the app and some other settings, I didn't realize the dress of the Barbie had dropped under my chair. Suddenly I realized nature was calling.

During my time in on the toilet, I realized out that the last three changes were stored, in case of emergency, and these objects could be restored at any time. To my pleasure I found an option to save the information separately so that it could be used at any time. While I was indisposed, I missed my sister walking in and looking for me, when she spotted the Barbie, she picked it up.

That was when the unexpected happened to her, what she didn't know was that she was in range of the scanner and I was still connected to it via the mobile app. The system, as before, indicated two chips containing information. As this was the same pop-up as before I didn't take the time to read it, and only checked to be sure that Barbie was going to be the dog again. A second warning showed up, more or less, highlighting that additional energy would be stored. I ignored it as I was 100% sure nobody else was in the house.

I knew that the second chip was the dress, former collar, to be turned back and I never thought to double check. Mel didn't see it coming, and had no chance to prevent what was coming her way. The Scanner read her chip, and the doll's, and did what it was programmed to do, dissolve the material and recreate the dog with its collar.

I had just finished when I heard some voices, and Laura calling for Daisy. Laura called to me and said, "Dad have you seen Daisy? I have been looking all over for her and I can't find her as all." I saw her tears and I was hoping everything was going as planned so I addressed the system and asked it to scan for the dog. You could see the joy on my little Laura's face, and of course mine when the computer reported the dog's location. What I didn't sense was the panic from my sister as she was now fighting for any way to interact as an inanimate object, let's just say her mission was impossible.

Daisy ran to Laura as though nothing had happened, the tears in Laura's face were already gone, and you could see the relief on mine as well. That was when Mel's parents arrived and told Laura not to run away, Nina's Mom brought the leash as well and attached it to Daisy's collar. We had a short exchange describing what happened so far, then they took Daisy and my little Laura and I was left alone again.

I was full of joy as, in my opinion, nothing unexpected had happened and all tests with animate and inanimate objects were successful, actually I thought perfect. I didn't want to stop here, the next thing on the app I wanted to investigate a bit further was the time limit and I had the perfect test subject my beloved Bot Nathalie a bit outdated after all these years but still my favorite.

I set the timer for five minutes, selected a new form for Nathalie, and where once stood an almost perfect Bot, now was a top notch Mobile. I picked it up was amused when it reacted to my voice yet failed to initiate a call, no service provider, and thought, "ah well you can't expect everything." Time was running out, soon the mobile returned to its original form as expected.

The checklist I had created in my mind was already at its end and every checkbox had

been marked as successful, that was when I decided to be adventurous. The first thing I prepared was a note to Mel; as she was still due to arrive. I stepped in the range of the scanner and choose the image of Nathalie with the timer set to 10 minutes and started the process.

As a duplicate of the original Nathalie, my AI program was now in charge, and I was just a passenger along for the ride, with no chance to fight it. My internal clock was counting down the time till I would return to my own form when the doorbell rang. As all the other Bots were quite far away, not to mention busy, the computer determined that I was an unassigned Bot. The real Nathalie was there but now so was I, the control computer was confused, and I was reported as a duplicate. The real Nathalie was sent to answer the door and I was sent to maintenance for further inspection.

As soon as I arrived the system began running tests. The time limit for my transformation arrived and I reverted back to my old self. I thought that was a close call, but it was a passing thought and I gave it no further attention. At the door a salesman was keeping the real Nathalie busy, I joined in and told him that I was not interested.

My next focus was getting back to the lab and altering the device. The computer didn't like duplicates. The first thing to disappear was poor Nathalie again, this time I turned her into a simple mobile with the time limit deactivated for safety reasons. I went back to the machine and, this time, I tried to think of something different. I looked through the 3D Files on my mobile and stopped at the fashion entries. My test subject was again poor little Nathalie Bot who existed in the form of a mobile right now.

I set the time limit to three minutes and the dress I chose appeared, exactly as expected, and stunning. This time I messed up, I didn't wait for it to revert and started the next test on the app, a pair of heels. The item was scanned but the second chip was missing, I ordered a second bot to walk to the scanner and again it worked without error. I picked up the heels and they looked perfect. I completely forgot about setting a time limit and therefore didn't pay enough attention; I should have, since when the limit ran out for the first transformation nothing happened.

I had something else in mind to try, Daisy; I still had her stored image, and the 3D Model, saved in the app. I knew that as a dog I could move about freely and I could interact with the app. I went to the scanner, set the timer for one hour, and when I confirmed the system asked for a second item to complete the action. I tried to figure out what it wanted and assumed that it was the collar. I made some specifications to prevent ending up as an inanimate object and got another chipped item to use with me. The process started and before I could blink, I was that little dog. I was soon running around the house trying to explore using all my new senses when I heard the door and saw Nina standing in front of me.

"Oh, hey Daisy, what are you doing in here on your own? You should be either with Laura or outside, but no worries, look what I got for you a new beautiful collar." She didn't even finish this sentence when my old collar was removed and the new pink one

was attached. Then Nina said, "See girl this is the right color for you and not that ugly old one." That said she attached the leash and dragged me out for a walk. At this point I thought to myself, "Oh hell she'll be up for a surprise, when the time runs out and I turn back."

After some time at the dog park I had a complete new understanding of dogs, but thought, "hell I'm not changing back, what the hell is going on?" I tried to think of a reason for this and was so looking forward to getting back to the lab and getting hold of the mobile app to change back. On the way back Nina collected Laura from her parents and was surprised when she spotted Daisy's twin.

Laura was filled with joy and delightedly screamed, "oh we got a second dog, can I keep her"? Nina had already figured it out and smiled, looked at the two of us and said, "Sweetie we can keep her for a while but I'm sure she will be missed by her owner." When we returned to our house I immediately tried to run to the mobile, to change back, but the real Daisy was on me in a second. Daisy thought I should be playing with her when we entered the lab.

Nina was with us in no time, I got the mobile but Daisy was fetching it and took it from me, Daisy was fast and I was afraid to break it. Nina was taking the mobile from her saying, "not so fast, and I won't make it this easy for you." That said she attached the leashes back to our collars and took us back to Laura stating, "Laura will be really disappointed when you are gone without saying good night."

Both of us protested and tried to get loose, but that just ended with Nina taking a firm grip and dragging us to Laura. When we arrived Laura was filled with joy even at her young age preparing the bath for the two of us, telling her mum that she will be able to handle the two. Nina told her, "Be careful to prevent the dogs from running around again." Then she left to prepare something for our meeting the next day. As soon as Nina was gone Laura removed the collar from each of us and put us in the bathtub specially designed for dogs, as soon as this was done she was using the hairdryer and a brush to get both of us to look pretty. Not my intention but I played along, the collar was attached to us again and I was impressed, when I saw Daisy with the pink collar and a beautiful matching bow tie attached to her. I didn't pay it much attention when it was my call and I ended up looking the same.

With that completed it was Laura's bedtime and after Laura was sent to the bathroom to get ready Nina checked on us and said with a chuckle, "Oh wow, Laura did a great job, who's the real one and who is the fake?" The night was quiet and I relaxed quite well, but the next day had me playing with Daisy and Laura who took me for some walks. They were keeping me busy and I was quite exhausted when Nina told Laura that we needed to give the second dog back to her owner, she would like to have her dog back.

I was already daydreaming to get my humanity back and to hold my family in my arms when Nina said my Name. The bad part was I wasn't listening and immediately Daisy went running to my wife. I was shocked when I realized what was going on; the real

Daisy was running up to my wife after she said my name. The leash was attached and then they were walking out, when I became fully aware of my mistake I wanted to run to catch up with them but it was too late, the door was closed.

Imagine my shock when Laura told me we were going out for a walk with Mum and Dad, I thought, "How is this possible? I'm her dad." The next thing I saw was me, or at least someone who looked exactly like my human self, destroying my world. There I was holding hands with Nina and asking Laura to join them with her dog for a walk. I was devastated how it happened wasn't the question. But was this copy really so good to not be spotted as fraud? The answer was soon to follow when my team arrived and I was lead out, dragged into the backyard. When everyone arrived they had the usual chat, I was lying on the grass trying to catch up as much as I could and awaiting my chance to get my life back.

I saw them eating, drinking, and chatting, the next thing I saw was the changing device in action with Jeff and Laura both heading to the scanner. Both turned into bots, I was bored when I saw it, as I was way past being amazed by this stage. When the Doc checked them I saw Amy smiling and trigger a scan of good old doc, then he changed into a bot as well. Nina, my look alike, and Alex were quite surprised by this action but smiled and said, "Ok maybe that was a bit mean, but now he can see first hand how it feels, usually he is just witnesses it from the outside." With that said the others started to laugh as well. The three bots were commanded to move out of reach of the scanner and then they continued, Amy asked Alex, "What would you like to be, what is your greatest fantasy?" When he replied that he was happy the way it is and that his craziest dreams already came true, working for the company, and having Amy as his girlfriend, she just smiled.

The Next thing I saw was some kind of lightning, or at least a blinding light, and then all of a sudden I saw seven Bots standing there in the lab. What was going on, what just happened, a malfunction? I hoped they had placed a time limit on their play session. With that in mind I saw all the doors open automatically this was a security procedure in case of an emergency. I know that in some companies it is the other way around but I was always afraid to be locked inside and so I implemented this measure myself.

Security was soon seen in almost every direction, after all this part of the facility was high security, only a limited group of people had access. Quite a few people checked the lab and what can I say, seeing Bots along with a strange machine and an open app waiting for a command. The security officer tried to figure out what he could but first decided to get the Bots out of the way. He gave a spoken command which forced them all to line up next to the scanner. Going through the 3D images caused the rest of the confusion. The guard looked over the Bots and noticed seven Bots were selected, just the amount he saw in front of him. They were all dressed like French maids and their bodies were just to his liking.

The guard pressed the button to confirm the change and was surprised when the Bots transformed to look exactly like the ones on the app. At exactly this moment the mobile's

battery ran out. Not paying it further attention he just asked them to state their designations and when he got a reply that they were not yet assigned, he did what seemed obvious, "Computer, please enter these bots into the system and send them to the shipping area to await further instructions."

I tried to interfere to get my team back, as well as my life, but Laura found me while I was distracted watching the event, attached a leash, and dragged me along telling me that this was no place for a dog. I didn't even think about refusing, as this was a good thing to keep my daughter safe and away from the machine.

Epilog:

The company did well and every attempt to locate the missing people lead to no result at all. Nina and my disappearance lead to Laura having her Grandparents as her legal guardians. She is a smart girl and I got the chance to be with her for at least a dog's life. I never got a chance to get back to the invention to turn back and when Laura went to university I was passed on to her Grandparents to take care. As for my former team, I have no idea but I would guess they were shipped to new households and probably are still serving, as MaidBots.

You might be wondering what became of the invention. Well as it was top secret I assume nobody understood it at all. I have no knowledge that someone continued this research.

The sky is the limit? No, Not at all, your imagination is and human error will always play a part.